

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9080

INFO AMCONSUL VANCOUVER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, SENV, CA

SUBJ: FLATHEAD/CABIN CREEK

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF JOINT PRESS RELEASE OF MARCH 9
US-CANADIAN BILATERAL MEETING ON CABIN CREEK MINING
DEVELOPMENT. TEXT IS SCHEDULED FOR RELEASE AT NOON
MARCH 11. IN INTERIM, YOU SHOULD FEEL FREE TO QUOTE
LIBERALLY FROM TEXT.

BEGIN TEXT: CANADIAN OFFICIALS MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE STATE OF MONTANA IN OTTAWA
ON MARCH 9, 1976, TO CONSULT WITH REGARD TO THE PROPOSAL
BY SAGE CREEK COAL LIMITED, A SUBSIDIARY OF RIO ALGOM
LIMITED, TO DEVELOP COAL DEPOSITS IN THE BRITISH COLUMBIA
HEADWATERS OF THE NORTH FORK OF THE FLATHEAD RIVER. THE
MEETING WAS FURTHER TO EXCHANGES OF NOTES BETWEEN THE
CANADIAN AND UNITED STATES GOVERNMENTS, WHEREIN THE U.S.A.
EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE PROJECT COULD SERIOUSLY
DAMAGE EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THE UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTAL
VALUE OF GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, THE FLATHEAD NATIONAL
FOREST AND THE FLATHEAD RIVER BASIN, AND COULD CAUSE
INJURY TO BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPERTY IN THE AREA.
CANADA, IN RESPONSE, GAVE ASSURANCES THAT ITS OBLIGATIONS
UNDER THE BOUNDARY WATERS TREATY WOULD BE HONOURED.

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DURING THE MEETING, CANADIAN OFFICIALS REITERATED THE ASSURANCES CONTAINED IN EARLIER CANADIAN NOTES AND OUTLINED IN SOME DETAIL BRITISH COLUMBIA AND FEDERAL LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES THROUGH WHICH COMPLIANCE WITH CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS WOULD BE ENSURED IN THE EVENT THAT RIO ALGOM CHOOSES TO SEEK APPROVAL TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT. CANADIAN OFFICIALS ALSO OFFERED TO FURNISH THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES WITH DETAILED ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES REQUIRED UNDER B.C. LEGISLATION AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE.

THE U.S. SIDE EXPRESSED ITS APPRECIATION FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND NOTED WITH SATISFACTION THE COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES THAT WILL BE REQUIRED FOR THE PROJECT.

BOTH DELEGATIONS AGREED ON THE UTILITY OF FURTHER CONSULTATIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT U.S. CONCERNS. IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES WILL SUPPLY THE CANADIAN AUTHORITIES WITH WATER QUALITY AND OTHER DATA FROM THE FLATHEAD DRAINAGE ON THE AMERICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER.

THE CANADIAN DELEGATION INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, ENVIRONMENT CANADA, ENERGY, MINES AND RESOURCES, INDIAN AND NORTHERN AFFAIRS, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITISH COLUMBIA. THE UNITED STATES DELEGATION INCLUDED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY, THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, THE BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, THE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, THE FOREST SERVICE, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MONTANA. END TEXT.
ENDERS

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